



FRIENDS

OF THE MATHEWS MEMORIAL LIBRARY

April 2008

Volume 26, Number 2

Fellow Friends of the Library,

I would like to say hello to you all in this, my first column as the newly installed president of the FOL. It is indeed wonderful to take over the position in an organization that is working so well and that has such a committed, skilled group of volunteers working for its continued success, and ultimately, of course, toward the success of our wonderful library.

I am a computer scientist with forty-eight years of experience in the field, including twenty-five years as a computer science professor. As such, I hope to contribute my technological skills to the FOL efforts. As a concrete start, I am redoing the FOL website. The current one was developed quickly and inexpensively to provide basic information. The new one will have far more color, information, and links.

The major event of this period, the first quarter of 2008, has been the FOL-funded report of the architects on the feasibility and rough plans for a possible “youth wing” of the library. I suppose we might call it a “teenage wing”. Kids in this age group have a tiny space assigned for their use in the far end of the current youth section of the library. It has a few computers, but is very small and has the feel of an after-thought. The library director, Bette Dillehay, would like to expand it so that the teens have an area devoted to themselves alone.

In all, the architects presented five plans. One of them was a clear favorite of those of us who attended the two presentations (the FOL

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY QUARTERLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING

APRIL 15

10 A.M.

MATHEWS MEMORIAL LIBRARY

**FIND OUT
WHAT THE FRIENDS ARE DOING**

**HEAR REPORT FROM
LIBRARY DIRECTOR**

WE HOPE YOU CAN COME

executive committee was well represented). What happens next? Well, probably nothing for a while given the current national and state economic situation. The rough estimate for the project cost was \$500,000. When and if the project moves forward, the Friends will no doubt be consulted and asked to take a role in raising a portion of the funds.

Contributions are continuing to arrive at a nice pace, and book sales at the Orrell building are brisk.

As our former president John Dayton said last year, remember that you can pitch in in several ways: 1) Volunteer your services, 2) Contribute funds, and 3) Donate used books. I'd like to add another: 4) Participate – both in FOL activities and in library events.

*Neil Webre, President
Friends of Mathews Memorial Library*



New Children's Librarian, Rosey Clark, reading to a Group of children along with volunteer Jane Senyk

FROM THE LIBRARY

Who Visits the Library and What Do They Do There

In 1938, Miss Irene Brooks, Mathews librarian, reported a daily circulation of 15 books to her 328 borrowers. Seventy years later in 2008, the library serves over 7,000 patrons who borrow an average of 92 items daily. Do the math and you will see that Miss Brooks' patrons outpaced today's readers by a ratio of 5 to 1. As we know, Mathews has not changed dramatically since 1938 in terms of population size. In terms of demographics, however, there are significant

changes and even more so in the lifestyles of those who now reside in the county.

Our response to this comparison could easily be one of alarm. Are we really reaching and serving the citizens of Mathews? What has become of the thrill of browsing through the catalog to find just the book you wanted to read, the smile on the librarian's face as she carefully records your choice and wishes you happy reading? Well, let's consider the average number of people who visit the library each day and examine the purpose of their visit. Currently, we greet an average of 190 visitors each day, and while numerous patrons select more than one item to check out, our circulation figures indicate that up to 98 people come for reasons other than to select reading materials. So, what do they do at the library?

During the month of February, 748 patrons in the adult and youth wings signed on to use the library computers or their laptops using the library's WiFi, accounting for an average of 28 persons per day, up 11% from the same period in 2007. The remaining 64 visitors are part of the slightly less than 700 adults and children who attended the programs and events that took place during the month. This included not only library-sponsored programs, but also the eleven non-library events that were held in the library. In addition, the AARP provided tax services to 131 members of the community as part of their Friday schedule.

How do all these numbers compare with other communities? While we have no precise numbers, it appears that service trends at the Mathews Memorial Library closely track those recorded nationally. Libraries are attracting retirees who have increased time to enjoy services of the library. Obviously, access to computers is a key factor, although not as great as one might imagine. According to an ICMA report, "Libraries have become much more important, just out of necessity, because people need a library to be that third place, beyond home and school or job, where they can come to find answers to

questions they have. Community needs are evolving and libraries are changing with them.”

In summary, the library is more than a place to check out books. It is a community center serving a multiplicity of needs and interests. Open seven days a week, the Mathews Memorial Library provides information, entertainment and opportunities for social interaction. Thank you for helping to make the Mathews Memorial Library a center of culture and learning.

Goodbye and Hello On February 29th, we bid farewell to Carol McCormack, who has served as head of youth services for the past five years. Carol is looking forward to pursuing her hobbies and spending time with family. On March 1st, we welcomed Rosey Clark, who comes to us from Newport News. Rosey holds a Master’s degree in education library school media. She brings enthusiasm and energy to the job. We look forward to an exciting future in the youth wing with Rosey in the lead. Please drop by and say hello.

Bette Dillehay, Library Director

NEW OFFICERS OF THE FRIENDS



*Judy Busby, Co-Recording Secretary
John Dayton, Immediate Past President
Nancy Lindgren, Corresponding Secretary
Neil Webre, President
Janice Phillips, Treasurer
Jane Senyk, Vice-President*

*Pam Viens, Co-Recording Secretary
Is missing from this picture.*

BOOK STORE FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY ORRELL BUILDING

Open Saturdays April 5 & May 3, 9 – 1
Special Sale on April 5, Videos 5/\$1.00
Special Opening for Bike Week,
Saturday, May 13, 9 – 1

Our summer schedule begins on Memorial Day weekend, Friday and Saturday, May 23 & 24, 9 – 1. After Memorial Day the Orrell Building will be open each weekend in the summer, Fridays and Saturdays from 9 – 1. If you would like to join the fun and volunteer on one of these days, give us a call, 725-4264. Donations of used books are welcome any time at the main library desk, the book drop at the Orrell Building or during a sale day. Thank you to the winter volunteers and the citizens of Mathews County who recycle their books at the Orrell Building. All proceeds benefit the library.

Jane & Dave Abbott, Co-Chairs

**Orrell Building gift certificates
Are available now.**

LAST ISSUE

If your address label says “2007,” this will be the last issue of the Friends newsletter that you will receive in the mail. It’s time to either renew or sign up for a “Life” membership. An application is on the back of this newsletter. Of course, if we have erred about your dues, please let us know that also.

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to new members: Janine Burns, Beverly Gayle, Joyce Martinez, and Sally Ann Wheat. We value your support and hope you will enjoy being a Friend.

MEMORIAL BRICK & WALKWAY

This first quarter has been extremely slow - no new brick orders. First time ever. That is the bad news. The good news is that there is still PLENTY of space for your inscribed bricks honoring or memorializing friends or family. And, although the cost of the bricks has increased since January, the Friends are absorbing the additional cost. Donations are the same as before - \$100 for a 4 x 8 brick with three lines of inscription; \$225 for an 8 x 8 brick with five lines of inscription. Let's start the 2nd quarter of 2008 with lots of brick donations. I need the exercise involved with installing them!

Roger Gamble, Chair

UPCOMING LIBRARY EVENTS

Don't miss another library event. Sign up on www.mathewslibrary.org for the online newsletter notification of what's coming up. You can also call the library at 725-5747 to be put on the list. By being notified in this way, you are also helping to save postage costs.

COMPUTER CLASSES

Intermediate internet classes are scheduled for April 14, 16, 17, and 18 from 1 to 3:30 p.m. Sign up on the library website or by telephone.

RICHARD NUNNALLY

April 9, 12:30 p.m.

Richard Nunnally, author and well-known gardening personality in Virginia, announced recently that he will visit Mathews on April 9 to film a program on Virginia's only asparagus farm. The farm, owned by John and Karen Weaver, will be the subject of his April 15 program. While in Mathews, he has accepted an invitation to participate in a luncheon program to be held at the Library. Reservations are required.

LUNCH BOX BOOK CLUB

April 30, 12:30 p.m.

Lizzette Carter, local author, will be the program feature for this Library event. She will discuss her book to be published in early April.

BOOK CLUBS

Read With Mathews Women – 10 a.m.
Fourth Thursday

Apr. 24 – *After This* by Alice McDermott
May 22 – *Water for Elephants* – Sara Gruen
June 26 – *The Year of Magical Thinking*
by Joan Didion

Mathews Men Readers – 11 a.m.
First Wednesday

May 7 – *The Green Hills of Africa*
By Ernest Hemingway
June 4 – *City on Fire* by Bill Minutasilo
July 2 – *The Reivers* by William Faulkner

TRIBUTE TO PAM



Be sure to notice the front planters of the library the next time you go. There is a red heart with “for Pam” written on it and the whole area is filled with beautiful pansies to honor Pam Machen for all the gardening help she has given to the Library.

FREE BOOKS ON THE INTERNET-PART I

In 1971, Michael S. Hart, a student at the University of Illinois, started a project with the aim of putting 10,000 widely read and widely consulted books into digital form and making them available at no cost to anyone who wanted a copy. These were pre-Internet, pre-CD, and even pre-floppy disk days. An embryonic version of the Internet was under development at the university, and he had the visionary idea that that development of it would someday make it possible to widely disseminate digital material. He named the project after the legendary fifteenth century printer Johannes Gutenberg, who is credited with establishing the use of movable-type presses, the seminal development in making books widely and affordably available.

His idea was to have volunteers type in the text of books that are in the public domain – books whose copyright, if they ever had one, had expired. Things lagged along for over twenty years when, serendipitously, along came personal computers,

then the Internet, and finally the World Wide Web. The titles stored by the project began to increase exponentially. Today, through the effort of volunteers, Project Gutenberg has over 24,000 books in its collection, with 50 new books being added each week. You can read all of the details in the Wikipedia entry for the project at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_gutenberg.

Electronic copies of its books are completely free of charge. You simply use your personal computer and Web browser to go to the Project Gutenberg home web page at http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main_Page. Want a copy of a book that you once loved as a kid but which is unavailable today, or a book that is not in the holdings of our library – go to the PG home page and type in the name of the author or the title of the book and see if it lists. If so, you can download it to a file on your computer and open it for reading. Many of the more popular books are also in audio form, and you can simply start them and listen.

There is limited space in this edition of the newsletter, so I’ll leave it at that for now and take up the subject again in the next newsletter. We’ll talk about a number of other free-book providers that followed PG’s example, and special devices for reading the digitized books.

Neil Webre

GIFTS OF BOOKS

The Friends have donated 18 books to nine service personnel in the past three months. These books are sent as part of the Operation Paperback project. We also had some extra dictionaries so we have donated 19 to Thomas Hunter Middle School. Thanks go to Mildred Stillman for making these arrangements.

Friends of the
Mathews Memorial Library
P.O. Box 127
Mathews, VA 23109-0127



BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MATHEWS, VA
PERMIT NO. 20

Date: _____

I Want to Open/Renew My Membership.

Remittance is enclosed to:

- Open My Lifetime Membership @ \$50 person
- Open My Annual Membership @ \$5 person
- Renew My Annual Membership @ \$5 person

I want to Support Library Special Projects.

- Enclosed is my gift of \$_____.

Mr/Mrs/Ms _____

Name

Telephone

Address

E-mail Address

Post Office

State

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*Contributions to the Friends of the Mathews Memorial Library
are tax deductible. Make checks payable to
Friends of the Mathews Memorial Library
and mail to P.O. Box 127, Mathews, Virginia 23109-0127.*

